



# The Searchlight

To Members of the  
The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc.



Volume 28, No.5

October 2019

## Journalist Michael Tymn, Leading Expert on Mediumship

by David Stang

During some 65 years of freelance writing, Michael Tymn, an 82-year old resident of Kailua, Hawaii, has contributed to a number of national magazines and big-city newspapers. Writing assignments have taken him to such diverse places as Panama, Glastonbury, Bangkok, Hollywood, Jerusalem, St. Paul, and Tombstone. He has interviewed many legendary sports figures. However, he says his most enjoyable and meaningful writing experience has been in writing and editing for our Academy during the past 20 years. "Most of the sports stuff had nothing more than entertainment value," he explains, "while writing for the Academy's two publications provided me the opportunity to delve into and explore the existential and more meaningful subject matters."

Tymn was born in Oakland, Calif., grew up in neighboring Alameda, graduated from San Jose State University. B.A., School of Journalism, 1958, spent three years as an officer in the Marine Corps before beginning 40-year-career in insurance claims and litigation management, retiring from full-time employment in 2002. While in the Marine Corps, he served as what is now called a public affairs officer and won the Silver Anvil presented by the American Public Relations Society for the best military public relations program worldwide in 1960. Mike lived and worked in California, Japan, Malaysia, South Vietnam, Philippines, and Guam before settling down in Honolulu in 1971. His foreign employment was with an international insurance company.

Married to Gina for 46 years, Mike has two daughters from a prior marriage (both presently employed as registered nurses), one stepson and four grandchildren. His primary hobby for 50 plus years was long distance running. He has won four

national masters championships and was the 1979 winner of the Maui Marathon at age 42, still the oldest person ever to win the race in its 50-year history and only person over 40 to win it. Mike joined our Academy in 1999 after winning the Academy's annual essay contest, The Robert H. Ashby Memorial Award. At the request of Boyce Batey, he began editing The Searchlight with the December 2002 issue. Prior to that time, it was a 1-2-page newsletter. Mike took it to 8 pages, next to 12 pages and after a few years to 16 pages. The last issue he edited was June 2019.

Mike succeeded Don Morse as editor of our Journal with the January 2012 issue and its last issue Mike edited was Summer 2018, after which our president, Jim Beichler took over and also succeeded Mike as editor of The Searchlight beginning with this issue.

Our former editor has authored seven books, six on spiritual matters and one on long-distance running. Mike contributed chapters to at least 10 other books. Overall, he has contributed more than 2,000 articles to around 50 publications over the past 66 years, since first serving as sports editor for his high school newspaper in 1953. He has been writing blogs for ten years at White Crow Books, the publisher of his last five books. For three decades Mike's principal interest and fascination has been with trance mediums through whom disincarnate spirit entities transmit information from the afterlife realm. His unquestionably peerless expertise on the otherworld connectedness feats of leading American, British and some Continental European mediums over the past two centuries is recognized worldwide.

I recently had the opportunity to put some questions to this omni-competent journalist.

— See *INTERVIEW*, page 6



## Zöllner's Spirit Theory

### by Jim Beichler

The Austrian astrophysicist JKF Zöllner (1834-1882) represents a rather strange case in the history of science, as well as the paranormal. He is now almost forgotten even though he was once considered the father of modern astrophysics due to his work on the original physics of spectral lines found in astronomical sources. A crater on the moon was even named for him in honor of his scientific accomplishments.



Unfortunately, he is also known for his 1870s theory that people become spirits in hyperspace or the fourth dimension of space when they die. His work on this theory and his hopes of verifying it brought him a great deal of disrepute, disgrace and disregard within the scientific community of his day.

He came up with this theory during a period of time when the new non-Euclidean geometries that implied the existence of a fourth dimension or hyperspace, as it was then called, were being popularized in both the scientific and non-scientific communities. During the 1870s and 80s, astronomers actually attempted to measure the curvature of space in the higher dimension by checking the angles of the largest triangle they could find, recent parallax measurements, to accurately measure distances to local stars.

Of course, Modern Spiritualism was also becoming popular at this time and it thought of itself as a popular scientific movement, but not an academic scientific movement, so they welcomed his theory and the attempts to verify it with open arms, further angering the scientific community. However, Zöllner went a step further and tried to explain the 'tricks' that Modern Spiritualists commonly performed using his hyperspace theory. In so doing, he became familiar with the work of Henry Slade, a Modern Spiritualist stage performer. Zöllner concluded that Slade's 'tricks' were true evidence that afterlife spirits of the dead still existed in the higher dimension of space and that Slade's tricks also verified the existence of hyperspace.

Zöllner conducted specific séance experiments with Slade in the parlor of his home under the watchful eyes of scientists and scholars. He and Slade developed specific experiments (tricks) whose results could only be explained by his theoretical hyperspatial (higher-dimensional) spirits. These experiments included slate-writing in closed slates (a higher dimensional being would not be bound by three-dimensional walls or barriers), untying string (the most complicated knot in three-dimensional space would appear as a non-

knotted or non-tangled straight line in four-dimensional space), recovering coins from sealed boxes (three-dimensional sealed boxes would not be sealed obstacles to a four-dimensional being) and the interlinking of two wooden rings (like knots, they would not be linked to a four-dimensional being). Zöllner conducted these experiments in the last months of 1877 in Leipzig.

The seances and experiments were observed by Wilhelm Eduard Weber (physicist), Gustav Fechner (physicist and founder of psycho-physics), Wilhelm Scheibner (mathematician), Wilhelm Wundt (the father of experimental psychology) and Immanuel Fichte (German philosopher), who also attended some of the sittings. However, as an experimentalist, Wundt, along with others, questioned the Zöllner's scientific methods and controls, while magicians and conjurers who witnessed the séances and their results claimed that they could duplicate Slade's results by common prestidigitation and trickery. However, Zöllner was never convinced by their arguments, skepticism and complaints, so he felt that he was being unfairly censured by the disapproval of the scientific establishment in a way that was very damaging to his good reputation as an astrophysicist.

Zöllner published a book describing his work under the title *Transcendental Physics*, which became popular among spiritualists and was even translated into English by Charles Carlton Massey. It was published in 1880. Unfortunately, Zöllner mentioned the theoretical work of Ernst Mach as supporting his own work in his 'Introduction' to the German edition of his books and drew the wrath of Mach, who did not want to be associated with Zöllner's name and work. Mach, a fellow Austrian physicist, was extremely well known in the scientific community and wrote his book the *Science of Mechanics: A Critical and Historical Account of Its Development* in 1883, shortly afterwards.

In this book, Mach included a very long criticism of Zöllner, without mentioning him by name, the new non-Euclidean geometries and theories of hyperspace, and the whole spiritualism movement. He referred to them all as 'prestidigitators' and further claimed that he could never believe or support the possible reality of a higher dimension of space unless material objects could be made to appear, as if by magic, from out of the higher dimension of space.

Mach developed a philosophy called empirical positivism which greatly influenced the coming Second Scientific Revolution, both positively in some cases and negatively in others, especially in the work of Einstein. Einstein adopted Mach's criticisms of Newtonian absolute space as well as the Mach Principle, both of which first appeared in Mach's 1883 book, within his own theories of relativity. Ironically (and there is a lot of irony in this story), Mach's philosophical notions of empirical positivism greatly, but negatively, influenced the early development of the new science of mind, psychology, which became a study of behaviorism rather than mind since Mach declared it impossible to directly

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## President's Message

**What's in a word?** Sometimes I think too much, other times not enough. We communicate with words, but sometimes not very well. We get mixed up when some words are used, and used wrongly, and others are not. Sometimes we don't even know what we and others are talking about, even when we think we know the meanings of the words we all use. For example, when I earned my Doctorate degree, I chose to call my major area of study theoretical parapsysics, which is essentially the physics of parapsychology, as it is now understood, if such a thing is even possible. But as I progressed over the next four or five years and my interests broadened, I redefined my field of study as bio-psycho-physics. That lasted about six or seven years, when my researches finally started to bear fruit. By then my investigations went even broader afield that about a decade ago I once again redefined my research as neurocosmology, the point where consciousness and the physics of the universe come together. But the problem of words, meanings and misconceptions still goes much further than that.



Science has not even concluded yet on how to define consciousness, let alone spirituality (which many people still think should not even be considered by science), and we cannot develop a theory of consciousness until we do so. So, everyone in the field of consciousness studies defines, describes and thinks of consciousness in a slightly different way. The general conclusion, or working hypothesis, that has been made by many of us is that consciousness, whatever it is, must be physical at some level even to even interact with our physical world, so consciousness is a legitimate scientific subject. But then we run into the problem that many other scientists and especially non-scientists want to do away with physicalism, because they think that science depends too heavily on physical aspects and explanations of our commonly experienced reality that science should concentrate more on other aspects of consciousness, such as NDEs, spiritual enlightenment, intuition, gut feelings and all of those thoughts in our minds that we know to be true without knowing how we know them.

Science clearly needs to look more carefully at spirituality, mysticism, esotericism, mystery traditions and experiences that science has ignored for so long as figments of the imagination. Science needs to consider these 'things' as part of our overall physical reality. The problem with science

is not with physicalism in these cases, it is with materialism. Too many people think that physical and material mean the same things, so when they criticize science for being too physical, they really mean too material. But in reality, what is material is always physical, but what is physical is not necessarily material. A rock is both physical and material, but the gravity field that allows the rock to fall to earth is physical but non-material. The same can be said for the electrical fields and magnetic fields that permeate and surround material bodies, which are only physical.

So, we can explain such ideas as life, in so far as it goes beyond the material biological and mechanical processes in a living body, a field effect, biofield or as I call it a matter/energy field. I associate mind with the overall electrical field of the body and consciousness with the internal magnetic field structures within a body. The reasons I do so are far beyond this small explanation, but they are valid, and they give me a completely physical, but non-material explanation of life, mind and consciousness. So, my physics of consciousness, is non-materialistic, which fits what many scientists believe today. Those scientists, philosophers, scholars and people in the know are finally beginning to reject the non-materialism of our world and look beyond the material to a postmaterialistic science to explain our commonly experienced reality. That is definitely a step in the right direction, but the problem with words still goes much further.

Perhaps the best available evidence for the non-materiality of our true experiential reality within another realm or greater hyperspace comes from ND experiencers and those who have reached mystical or spiritual enlightenment. *i.e.*, they have experienced direct contact with the higher-dimensional realm or physical space through their own higher consciousness. Unfortunately, psychics and others are almost unanimously unable to describe this otherworldly experience because neither science nor philosophy, nor even common people, have ever developed either the concepts or language to describe such experiences. All our intellectual and lingual concepts are based on our lives and normal sensations having been experienced within this three-dimensional space with time. So, we only think that we occupy a three-dimensional space because our brains are hardwired to place all of our experiences within this background to make sense of them. It is a type of evolutionary survival instinct that we all share.

The conclusion then is that we actually exist in a higher-dimensional space than we normally sense or can commonly understand. Such an existence would certainly be physically possible, but not materially possible, because we can only determine

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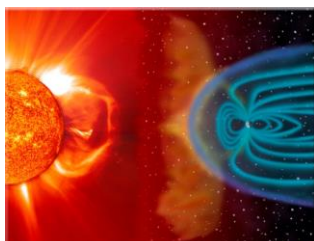


## Searchlight Media Watch



by Tom and Lisa Butler, NST

**Humans Can Sense Earth's Magnetic Field:** a new study suggests that humans, like many other animals, can sense Earth's magnetic field. Dozens of participants were placed in a Faraday cage—an enclosure designed specifically to block external magnetic fields—and then subjected to magnetic forces that the Caltech researchers could control themselves. This allowed the scientists to see exactly how the brains of the volunteers reacted to changes in the magnetic field without any external influence. What the team found was that while the participants said they didn't actively feel any changes happening, their brains were telling a different story. However, we still don't know if this information is being used by our brains in any meaningful way.



From: Wehner, Mike. "Experiment proves that humans can actually sense Earth's magnetic field." Yahoo News. 2019. [news.yahoo.com/experiment-proves-humans-actually-sense-164604906.html](https://news.yahoo.com/experiment-proves-humans-actually-sense-164604906.html)

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**Consciousness:** Scientists have long been trying to understand human consciousness; the way we are made aware of thoughts and sensations inside our minds. There used to be an assumption that consciousness is produced by our brains, and that in order to understand it, we just need to figure out how the brain works. But this assumption raises questions. First of all, decades of research have not shown this and there are discrepancies between consciousness and brain activity. Brain cells fire away almost as much in some states of unconsciousness (such as deep sleep) as they do in the wakeful conscious state. Also, if you held a human brain in your hand, you would find it to be a soggy clump of grey matter, a bit like putty, weighing about 1.3kg. How is it possible that this grey soggy stuff can give rise to the richness and depth of your conscious experience?

view that it is a fundamental quality of the universe. This might sound far-fetched but think about the other "fundamentals" in the universe we take for granted, such as gravity and mass. Consciousness would have the same status as those.

From: Taylor, Steve. "Spiritual science: how a new perspective on consciousness could help us understand ourselves." The Conversation. 2019. [theconversation.com/spiritual-science-how-a-new-perspective-on-consciousness-could-help-us-understand-ourselves-116451](https://theconversation.com/spiritual-science-how-a-new-perspective-on-consciousness-could-help-us-understand-ourselves-116451)

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**Faith Groups Seek Afterlife for Shuttered Churches in Canada:** As many as a third of Canada's houses of worship, about 9,000 churches, synagogues, mosques and temples, could be in danger of being demolished over the next ten years. That's an estimate from the National Trust for Canada, a nonprofit group dedicated to preserving historic buildings in that country. Faith groups are the second-largest real estate holder in Canada — second only to the government of Canada itself, according to the National Trust. One reason for the decline in houses of worship is the growing secularism in Canada, which means that fewer people are attending services. Natalie Bull, executive director of the National Trust, pointed to aging congregations and "dwindling dollars in the



collection plate." As a result, houses of worship have become an endangered species. "Thousands of these buildings are doomed," Bull said. Since

churches or other houses of worship often house programs—such as soup kitchens, homeless shelters, tutoring programs and other outreach ministries—the whole community can lose when a congregation shuts down. Bull would like to see shuttered churches and other houses of worship converted to things like office space for nonprofits, food banks, community centers, affordable housing or other functions.

From: Longhurst, John. "Faith groups seek afterlife for shuttered churches in Canada." Religion News Service. 2019. [religionnews.com/2019/03/22/faith-](https://religionnews.com/2019/03/22/faith-)

groups-seek-afterlife-for-shuttered-churches-in-canada/

**Philosopher to Argue Against an Afterlife at Romanell Conference.** John Martin Fischer is a professor of philosophy at the University of California, Riverside. In 2012, Fischer received the largest grant ever awarded to a humanities professor. It was a grant for \$5.2 million from the John Templeton Foundation to study immortality. However, one wonders if any information that is positive to the belief in life after death will ever come from this multi-million-dollar grant. His keynote speech in July at the Romanell Conference titled “Near-Death Experiences: To the Edge of the Universe” sought to explain away the out-of-body experiences of those near death. Fischer has argued that immortality would be welcome, but he is an atheist who doesn’t even believe in immortality.



John Martin Fischer

From: Gambini, Bert. “Philosopher to argue against an afterlife at Romanell Conference.” University of Buffalo. 2019. [grad.buffalo.edu/news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/ub-reporter-articles/stories/2019/07/romanell-conference.detail.html](http://grad.buffalo.edu/news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/ub-reporter-articles/stories/2019/07/romanell-conference.detail.html)

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**Sauna:** Regularly roasting yourself in a sauna bath can be good for both your heart and your memory and may also reduce your risk of stroke and respiratory disease, and soothe headaches, according to several rigorous large-scale studies. One study published this year, which followed 1,628 Finnish men and women aged 53 to 74 for 15 years, found that those who took a sauna bath four to seven times a week had a remarkable 62 percent lower risk of stroke than those who took saunas just once a week. Another study conducted by the Finnish Sauna and Cardiovascular Health project at University of Eastern Finland and published in 2015 looked at a population-based sample of 2,315 middle-aged Finnish men aged 42 to 60 from East Finland, and found that frequent sauna bathing was associated with a reduced risk of coronary diseases, sudden cardiac death, hypertension, and Alzheimer’s disease, and dementia. However, the 2018 update that patients with poorly controlled

blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, unstable angina, and advanced heart failure or heart valve disease stay cool.

From: French, Kristen. “Saunas for Stroke and Hypnosis for Chronic Pain? Here’s What the Science Says.” Endpoints. 2018. [endpoints.elysiumhealth.com/the-science-behind-alternative-medicine-1a3285a38142](https://endpoints.elysiumhealth.com/the-science-behind-alternative-medicine-1a3285a38142)

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**Werner Von Braun:** The United States granted U.S. citizenship after 1955 to those scientists who had worked on the World War II German V-2 rocket. They were then “drafted” to work on our U.S. rocket science. One such scientist, Werner von Braun, was considered in Germany to be “the Father of Rocket Science.” Many at NASA say that the US would not have reached the moon without Von Braun. One of his quotes, “Nature does not know extinction; all it knows is transformation. Everything science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death.”



From: Ballard, Patricia. “Do we live in a multi-dimensional universe? | Pastor Talk.” *Oroville Mercury Register*. 2019. [orovillemr.com/2019/06/01/do-we-live-in-a-multi-dimensional-universe-pastor-talk/](http://orovillemr.com/2019/06/01/do-we-live-in-a-multi-dimensional-universe-pastor-talk/)

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**The Story of God:** There are more chapters in The Story of God: National Geographic released Season 3 of the documentary travel series earlier this year after completing an investigation into alleged sexual harassment by host Morgan Freeman. Nat Geo says its investigation “revealed no incidents of concern during any of our work with Mr. Freeman.” In its critically acclaimed third season, The Story of God will take viewers on a journey into cultures and religions around the world and their interpretations of God, the Devil, heaven and hell and the afterlife.

From: Schwartz, Ryan. “TVLine Items: Morgan Freeman’s Story Continues, Kidding Preview and More.” TV Line. 2018. [tvline.com/2018/08/31/the-story-of-god-season-3-morgan-freeman-sexual-harassment-national-geographic/](https://tvline.com/2018/08/31/the-story-of-god-season-3-morgan-freeman-sexual-harassment-national-geographic/)

**INTERVIEW** *From page 1*

***How did you first acquire an interest in the paranormal, trans-personal and altered state realms of consciousness?***

It just evolved over time. I was raised in the Catholic Church, but I could never make sense of the afterlife we were taught. It seemed so unfair. A person could live a saintly life but then commit one mortal sin before death and end up in hell. But another person could lead a sinful life and repent on his deathbed, thereby making it to purgatory and eventually to heaven. It was all a matter of luck or dying at an opportune time.

During my early 30s, I gave Protestantism a try, but its afterlife, not having the middle ground of purgatory, made even less sense. Moreover, I just couldn't get into the whole "worship" thing. I read Dr. Raymond Moody's book on NDEs soon after it was released in 1975 and continued from there with the works of Baird Spalding, Carlos Castaneda, and Edgar Cayce. Actually, I think I planned on such an interest before I was born, because there was no single incident in my life at any time that prompted an interest in the subject.

***How did it come to pass that your greatest interest and internationally renowned expertise pertains to mediums and what they have channeled over the past two centuries?***

My initial interest was in NDEs, OBEs, and reincarnation. I didn't get into mediumship until the early 1990s. I can't pinpoint a reason why I found trance mediumship more interesting than the others except that some of it seemed more evidential and went more deeply into the afterlife environment. Books by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett, Sir William Crookes, and other famous scientists of that era intrigued me, and I searched for every book I could find on the subject.

***What got you started writing about it?***

While I majored in journalism in college, I never got into the field full-time. When I completed my three years military service in 1961, newspapers were closing right and left due to the growing popularity of television news. Thus, there were few opportunities in journalism, and I ended up with a career in insurance claims and litigation management. However, I did a lot of freelance writing over the years, mostly covering endurance sports (long-distance running, ocean swimming,

road cycling, and triathlons) for newspapers, as well as writing for several running magazines. In fact, I wrote a monthly column for one national track & field publication for 35 years, hanging it up just a few years ago. I also wrote a monthly feature for a running magazine for 17 years.

To make a long story short, I saw a need to try to explain some paranormal phenomena in layman's terms. So much of the reporting by the pioneers of psychical research was stuffy and long-winded. A single paragraph would sometimes extend a thousand or more words. I had to read some of it two or three times to make sense of it. I concluded that it was not fully appreciated by most people because of the scientific way it was presented. There is a big difference between academic writing and journalism. My objective was to simplify it so that it was better understood by the masses.

***Why has the issue of survival of one's soul and the nature of consciousness subsequent to one's physical demise been so important to you?***

I've often wondered about that and really don't know. As I mentioned earlier, it must have been part of my life plan before birth. It seems natural to me that it should be the most important thing for everyone, and it really puzzles me that so many other people are not interested in the survival of consciousness.

***From what you have learned from your research concerning the afterlife, what do you expect your afterlife to be like and what kind of beings do you expect to be befriending subsequent to your making the transition to spirit form?***

It's more a matter of what it isn't rather than what it is. It isn't the humdrum heaven and horrific hell of orthodox religions. It's not about floating around on clouds and strumming harps twenty-four seven. It's a much more dynamic existence, apparently similar to what we are experiencing in the terrestrial life, at least in the lower realms. I'm satisfied to believe that it is beyond human comprehension, yet something to look forward to if we have lived an essentially moral life.

### **A Great Opportunity**

**We need new authors and book reviewers for our ASCSI publications. If you interested in publishing your work in either the Journal or Searchlight, contact the editor, Jim Beichler, at [jebco1st@aol.com](mailto:jebco1st@aol.com) for details.**

***Have you yet formed any goals regarding what you would like to achieve in the afterlife prior to your possible reincarnation?***

No, it is beyond me to make goals in an environment that exceeds my comprehension. While I believe in reincarnation, I don't see it as living one life after another. I lean more toward what the discarnate Frederic Myers explained—that each of us is part of a group soul and just parts of that soul reincarnate here and there, not the entire soul and not the complete individual.

If you were to single out a few major inferences or conclusions you have reached about the nature of the various paranormal, trans-personal and altered state realms of consciousness how would you phrase them?

First, consciousness does survive death. Secondly, there are many realms in the afterlife and we initially settle down in the one we have prepared ourselves for in the material life and advance from there. Thirdly, we reunite with loved ones on the Other Side. Fourth, it is a meaningful existence and a more dynamic life than the one we are now experiencing.

***What do you expect to become the paramount future issues likely to be addressed by those studying, writing about and participating in consciousness research?***

I think we'll just keep reinventing the wheel – one that was pretty solid and sturdy 100 years ago. We just keep spinning that wheel while going nowhere. After nearly a century, parapsychology steers clear of the survival issue or just beats around the bush on it. As it was a hundred years ago, it is “too unscientific.”

***What do you regard to be the most difficult challenges facing our Academy in managing to remain a viable and significant institution with a continuing focus on both the spiritual and secular realms of our human spectrum of consciousness?***

Getting people to take an interest and volunteer their time, the same as it has been for the 20 years I have been with the Academy. Little has changed.

***To the extent that you are able to predict it, what appears to be ahead of you during the remainder of your present incarnation?***

I don't know how much time I have left in this realm of existence, but I would like to keep my blog going at White Crow Books and do at least one more book, which I am working on now. It's mostly a collection of past blogs, but it is aimed at making sense out of the nonsense that seems to prevail in the psychical research of yesteryear. I'm also

planning to collaborate with my friend Rick Darby in a website to be called “Cross-Correspondences” in which we will dialogue on various issues related to life, death, and the survival of it all.

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## **Zöllner's Spirit Theory**

(continued from page 2)

know either mind (and thus consciousness) or our true physical reality, since we could not directly sense them. We only knew of them indirectly through our ‘sensations’ of them.

But Zöllner's theory and research immediately raised a bitter controversy, which further ruined his scientific reputation, even without the long-term effects caused by Mach's criticism and the effects of Mach's positivism on science as a whole. The German philosopher Hermann Ulrici published an article describing Zöllner's theory and his experiments to verify the theory in an academic journal, which tended to focus greater attention on Zöllner from other scientists in Germany. This caused a heated controversy over Zöllner's theory and work. Wundt published a rejoinder to Ulrici, denouncing both the experiments and spiritualism as non-scientific. Enraged, Zöllner next threatened Wundt with a lawsuit, and even claimed that Wundt was possessed by evil spirits.

Fichte and Ulrici endorsed and defended Zöllner's experiments in the ensuing debate over his theory and verification experiments. That endorsement was further supported by an affidavit from Bellachine, the conjurer at the court of Berlin. On the other hand, the report of the skeptical Seybert Commission quoted testimonies from Scheibner, Fechner, and others that Zöllner, at the time of his experiments, was of ‘unsound mind. Modern historical publications still characterize Zöllner as having lost his mind, or something like that, rather than explain what really happened. Zöllner was chairperson of astrophysics at Leipzig University until his death in 1882, so he was never able to defend himself against the charges brought against him by the Seyfert Commission.

In his 1886 book *Birth and Death as a Change of Form of Perception*, Baron Lazar De Baczolay Hellenbach, wrote that Zöllner, despite the charges and claims against him as well as the negative portrayals of him and his scientific methods, “was in his last days deeply wounded and embittered by the treatment of his colleagues, whose assaults he took too much to heart. Zöllner, however, was in perfect possession of his intellect till his last breath.” This description of Zöllner has continued until modern times and still damages his reputation as a scientist. Ironically, modern scientists who dabble in the paranormal and talk about the afterlife are treated nearly as badly as Zöllner was over a century ago. And ironically, ***Zöllner's theory that spirits of the dead exist in a four-dimensional hyperspace is essentially true.***



## *President's Message continued from page 3*

the dimensionality of the space we occupy by normally sensing the three-dimensionality of the material bodies that occupy space. Otherwise, we do not and cannot normally sense space itself, unless through our hypothetical sixth sense, and cannot truly know how many dimensions our commonly experienced space has.

It could even be possible that space has no dimensions and that we only create its dimensionality due to the presence of matter. The dimensions of space that we use in mathematics and science may only be agreed upon conventions that simplify what we normally sense, in which case the concept of dimension would completely disappear at a higher level of consciousness than we now possess. If science can understand how true reality works and accept these conceptual meanings for the words that I have discussed, we would all be further along in raising the levels of our individual and collective consciousness and spirituality. After all, that is our existential purpose in both life and death (afterlife), increasing our own level of consciousness so we can increase the awareness and consciousness of the universe its 'self' within its 'self'.

Now that these problems have been defined for all to see, we can carry on with fixing more problems with other commonly used words. Psychics, mediums and experiencers like to say that everything vibrates and has a frequency. These words are commonly used for an experiential description of reality, but they present a very real problem for scientists and especially physicists. Everything does not vibrate, and everything does not have a frequency, even at the smallest level of physical reality as every scientist well knows. There is simply nothing in present-day physics or any other branch of legitimate science that supports this conclusion (or hypothesis). Whatever experiencers, psychics and others are describing with these terms, all scientists will look askance and suspiciously at their descriptions of a higher reality as long as they use them.

There are many types of motion and they exist at all levels of our nature and our physical reality, but mostly they break down to linear motion (along a line, straight or curved), circular or rotational motion (orbits and spins), wave motion and vibrations, or a combination of these. Linear motions, the most common form of motion, do not have frequencies, while the others are called periodic (repeating) motions, all of which can be characterized by their frequencies. Light is not a vibrational motion, but it does have a frequency because it is a wave motion.

And finally, psychics, mediums, experiencers, and even some scientists and physicists like to say that everything is energy, which is just not true. These scientists, as well as some psychics and others, use the Einstein equivalence of mass and energy ( $E = mc^2$ ) to make this claim, and make it sound legitimate, but that is not how this equation is interpreted in physics. All this relationship implies is that matter/mass and energy can be transformed, one into the other, under special physical

conditions, but it does not say that they are the same thing. Some quantum scientists like to say that all is energy in the end, but they do so for completely different reasons and have no scientific evidence or way of verification to back up that hypothesis. That claim just makes it convenient for them to fix some of their data to fit physically observed phenomena and experimental data, fulfilling their preconceived notions of reality.

When scientists do this, they confuse people who do not know the science behind this claim. The point is that there is nothing confirmable in nature, nor in any experiment that science has ever come up with, to show that everything is 'energy' in the end or at the most fundamental level of our reality. It is like saying that everything is consciousness, which is another hypothesis that has no credible scientific evidence to verify the claim. And until we have that evidence, or an experiment that can verify either of these hypotheses, the scientific community will not listen seriously to the claims of psychics, mediums and experiencers, except for a few forward-thinking scientists. Psychics need to give scientists a break, and scientists should give psychics a break, and they both need to start listening to each other and consider other possibilities, so that both can progress forward toward a common end. I have personally had both sides of this argument give me a hard time, and many still do, simply because I have an open mind on the subject (as those people who personally know me are fully aware).

But in the end, science, as it now defines itself, will **never** accept those aspects of consciousness that deal with 'paranormal' and related anomalous phenomena, or that they are still **natural** although paranormal, let alone the possibility of an afterlife, **no matter how much evidence is gathered and no matter how convincing that evidence is**. Science has simply never developed the conceptual tools, intellectual tools or the vocabulary to handle such possibilities. Just as psychics and other believers in the paranormal have not taken the science courses needed to learn how scientists think and talk. The same is true for the belief that NDEs and spiritual/mystical enlightenment show us new aspects of a more comprehensive multi-dimensional physical reality than we normally perceive or experience. **Accepting these possibilities would redefine science!**

Science will **only accept the paranormal and the possibility of an afterlife** when a new theory of physical reality emerges, a complete theory of unification, that directly and logically implies the existence of them from its own fundamental principles. This new theory of reality can only be accepted by science for purely physical reasons that have nothing to do with any implications for spirituality and consciousness that will emerge **naturally and logically** from the theory. That **would be revolutionary, and it is happening right now!**

— James E. Beichler, PhD





**Wizards of the North: The Brothers Davenport**, edited by N. Riley Heagerty, Tempestina Teapot Books, 2019, 155 pages. (Available at [www.TheRisenBooks.com](http://www.TheRisenBooks.com))

“Their exhibitions have puzzled the brains and upset theories of some of our wisest men, and many have been constrained to admit that no human power could give such marvelous demonstrations, as have been witnessed the past week at Willard’s.” So read the Washington, D.C. Chronicle in 1864 in a report on Ira and William Davenport following their exhibitions in the national capital.

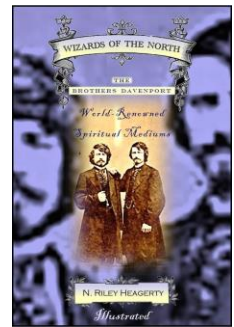
“The Davenport Brothers, above and beyond any other mediums in all of recorded Spiritualism, put their gifts to the ultimate test, traveling thousands and thousands of miles, including many cities of Europe, to demonstrate the reality of spirit power,” offers author Riley Heagerty, possibly the most knowledgeable person in the United States on the history of mediumship. “At their own expense they rented public halls and challenged the world at large to come and witness phenomena which passed the bounds of ordinary belief. In so doing, they gained the admiration of the majority, but aroused the vile poison of the medium-hating thugs also, and they were everywhere, ready to pounce, ready to condemn... If ever there was ever an adventure on the high seas of mediumship, this was it.”

Like nearly all the famous mediums of yesteryear, the Brothers Davenport, as they were usually called, have gone down in history, primarily at Internet web sites, including Wikipedia, as clever magicians or outright frauds. It is difficult, however, to reconcile such a disparaging label with the many eye-witness accounts set forth in this book.

Residents of Buffalo, New York, Ira Davenport was 16, and his brother William just 14 when their mediumistic abilities were first recognized in 1855. Their sister Elizabeth (Libby), only 10 at the time, also had the gift. As recorded by two early biographers of the brothers, Pascal B. Randolph and Dr. T. L. Nichols, various thumps, loud noises, cracks, and raps were heard around the Davenport house as early as 1846, before the advent of Spiritualism with the Fox Sisters of nearby Rochester, NY, but it wasn’t until after 1855 that the family began to recognize that some invisible intelligence was behind it all. In those early sittings, there were many messages from deceased loved ones coming by means of both raps and automatic writing by Ira. But it was the physical phenomena that seemed to impress everyone the most, including levitations, one in which Ira was seized by the unseen power and “was placed first upon the table, and then floated over the heads of all present, all around the room, coming in

in the twinkling of an eye, with the western end. He floated nine feet clear of the floor, and every person in the room was offered the opportunity of feeling him while thus suspended in the air.” Suddenly, both William and Libby were raised and “flitting hither and thither” in the air.

As their abilities developed, word spread of the “wonder boys” and people came from all over the country to witness the phenomena. A Dr. Carter, who lived in their town, convinced them to tour the country and give exhibitions. Unfortunately, entertainment was given priority over more evidential mediumship and the primary phenomena demonstrated at the exhibition involved the brothers being securely bound with cords about the arms, legs, and feet, being placed in a cabinet, and then freeing themselves almost instantaneously, seemingly something similar to the “magic” acts of the Great Houdini many years later, although apparently much faster than Houdini.



Another feature called for floating musical instruments, as many as six at one time, playing popular music of the day. Although audiences were amazed and awed and the Davenport brothers gave all the credit to the “spirits,” many assumed it was very clever conjuring, the work of illusionists. Newspaper reporters didn’t seem to know what to make of it. “Independent of the high scientific mystery that attends this phenomenon, there is a fund of amusement to those who do not aspire to look deeply into spiritual matters,” a reporter for the National Republican of Washington, D.C., wrote.

Their exhibitions took them to the England, France, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Australia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, to name only some. They were touring in Australia when William died on July 1, 1877 at age 36.

As Heagerty summarizes it, the Brothers Davenport “never claimed anything beyond saying that they were instruments by which strange forces were able to manifest.” Moreover, he points out that they were arrested in New York because they refused to obtain a magician’s license, as they were not magicians, and they spent time in jail.

Historians have a way of distorting truth to their own biases, and if we rely on the “historians” contributing to the modern references, the Brothers Davenport were just a couple of frauds. This book tells a completely different story.

– Michael Tymn

**Psychology of the Soul AND the Paranormal**, by Rev. Karen E. Herrick, Ph.D., 2019, 194 pages, available at Amazon.com or by email karen@karenherrick.com

Author Karen Herrick, a past-president of the Academy, is not your garden-variety psychologist – the kind that believes all of psychology must fit into the narrow boundaries accepted by mainstream reductionist and rationalistic science. As a transpersonal psychologist, she delves into the spiritual underpinnings of human behavior in this book, offering her views on various kinds of paranormal and mystical phenomena and how they relate to the development of our personalities and the evolution of our souls. Moreover, she departs from the usual aloofness and stultifying formalities of the academicians and fundamentalists of psychology by writing in a personal and conversational manner while sharing her own experiences in dealing with dysfunctional and addictive people. She further shares her observations and conclusions from 30 years of clinical practice.

While the mainstream psychologist might diagnose a person experiencing paranormal phenomena as being of unsound mind, whatever technical name she or he assigns to the “disorder,” Herrick stresses that these experiences happen to healthy and normal functioning people and often have meaning. The problem is that most psychotherapists are not trained to appreciate or understand spiritual experiences and therefore may do more harm than good.

As a foundation for transpersonal psychology, Herrick refers to the works of pioneering psychologists William James and Carl Jung. Her many lectures throughout the United States on dysfunctions, addictions, dissociation, and grief are delivered from a Jungian perspective. “Jung felt that psychic reality, which is knowing beyond the psyche or mind and physical or rational processes that are known and/or understood, would be the most important achievement of modern psychology if only it would be recognized,” she writes, clearly subscribing to Jung’s belief that most people can live a much healthier life if only they could know or feel there is a spiritual purpose underlying it all.

Herrick tells of growing up in a dysfunctional family, her father an alcoholic and her parents at odds on religion. That was followed by marriage to an alcoholic. “Alcoholics come in all sizes, shapes and moods,”

Herrick explains why she didn’t learn from her father. “Some are happy when they drink. Others

become moody and despondent. Some become aggressive and argumentative; and some alcoholics are sociopathic because their anger and resentments have turned into hatred in their later life.” She adds that the anger and resentments often increase over the years and some of them turn to illegal and immoral behaviors that was uncharacteristic of them when they were younger.

As a result of her parents’ conflict over religion, Herrick was turned off to religion. “What I believed in being raised in beautiful upstate New York, was nature,” she writes. “I knew that something had created this beautiful world, and I did and do very much enjoy nature.” Various spiritual experiences, both her own and those reported by clients, prompted her to explore mystical and paranormal phenomena. These experiences were validated when she read William James’s classic, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. “Eventually, I began learning and teaching about mediums and some of the tenets of the religion of Spiritualism,” she continues, adding that a number of her clients have been helped in overcoming chronic grief by visiting a medium.

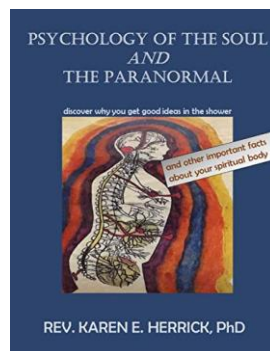
While mainstream psychology is stuck in the muck and mire of scientism, i.e., scientific fundamentalism, Herrick continues to explore spiritual etiologies for mental disorders. “I believe that this small voice in our head comes from our soul through the unconscious where our soul resides,” she offers. “The law of polarity seeks to balance us with positive or negative reactions to our energy or electrical field. This law works with our vibrations and our thoughts. In this way, thoughts are very real things that affect us, floating between the two worlds in our dreams and when we are awake.” She goes on to suggest that we all receive vibrational frequencies through our vagus nerve, what Darwin called the pneumogastric nerve. She provides a number of very interesting illustrations showing how the vagus nerve relates to our invisible energy field.

The astral body, the aura, the chakras, clairvoyance, ectoplasm, out-of-body experiences, near-death experiences, the silver cord, trance, repressed memories, defense mechanisms, extrasensory perception, synchronicity, automatic writing, spirit photography, slate writing, and various other subjects are all part of the discussion.

In the concluding chapter of the book, Herrick laments the fact that transpersonal psychology has not caught on as much as those who see the wisdom in it could have hoped, but she remains optimistic that future psychology will investigate spiritual experiences and better understand how they transform lives.

Dr. Raymond Moody, the renowned scientist and popular author who initiated the study of near-death experiences during the 1970s, has referred to her as “a new breed of therapist who is dealing with a vast range of experiences, which have emotional impact on people’s lives.”

– Michael Tynn



**Sky People: Untold Stories of Alien Encounters in Mesoamerica** by Ardy Sixkiller Clarke, 2015, Career Press, Inc. 220 W. Parkway #12, Pompton Plains, NJ, 07444, 319 pages.

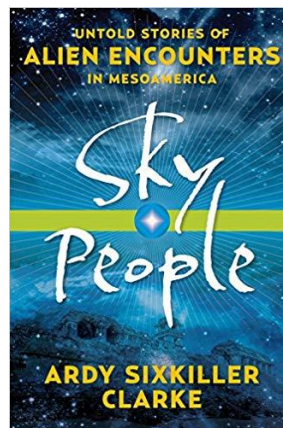
From an early age, Dr. Clarke was fascinated by the 1839 exploratory travels of John Stevens and Fredrick Catherwood into Central America and Mexico. As a teenager, she promised herself that she would someday follow in their footsteps with the additional purpose of collecting UFO stories from the indigenous people living there as well and visiting ancient archaeological sites. Dr. Clarke was well suited for this project since she is a member of a Native American tribe in Montana and has several degrees in academia. Currently, she holds the position of Professor Emeritus at Montana State University and is Director of the Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Education.

On her first morning in Guatemala, Dr. Clarke met with her driver, Buddy for local sightseeing. Then she hired Maguel who became her major driver and interpreter. He introduced her to his relative named Heraldo, and like many others there, he had seen a UFO at close range. Many such encounters with UFO sightings and interactions with them in various ways were common (which were verified by 89 her later interviews over the span of several years there). The indigenous people described the UFOs in various ways. Some said they looked like enormous petroleum tanks but more commonly were described as the round ones that looked like “two saucers glued together with a hump on the top. Some were so huge they seemed to “blot out the sky” and sometimes smaller ships emerged from the larger one. In some cases, human-like entities emerged and dug in the ground. They seemed to be looking for bones or some remembered being taken forcefully by the “sky gods” in the ships but couldn’t recall what happened there. Some were unwell for days or weeks after being returned. What seemed to make these people refer to them as gods was their apparent ability to walk through stone walls and how they could suddenly appear, disappear, then sometimes suddenly reappear. Many people there believe the Maya are their descendants from the star people who once colonized our planet and lived here for a time.

One male interviewee related that when he was taken aboard one of the space crafts, he was told that his “knowledge of the stars was hidden in the Maya hieroglyphics, but it has never been deciphered correctly.” They gave him predictions of things to come on our planet; for instance, there will be great upheaval, wars, earthquakes, fires, etc. but a new world will come. “We are living in the fourth world but the fifth one is coming.”

Thomas E. Bullard, a well-known Folklorist

conducted a study in Mesoamerica of 270 abduction cases. He reported 13 experienced healing (4%) of serious diseases that were beyond conventional western medicine but seemed to be quickly, easily cured by extraterrestrials.



Dr. Clarke interviewed a man, Salvador, who had been diagnosed with late stage lung cancer. He explained that he was not abducted. Instead he related that five balls of light came into his room and circled around his bed. “They slowly went up and down my body. One centered on my head and stayed there. The

others focused on my chest which became very warm. Suddenly, I could breathe (normally). Then the balls went out the door.” He looked out the window and saw the men come out of balls of light. A beam of light came down from the trees above. “They disappeared into the light.” Salvador had no signs of cancer four years later. His mother as well as the local church leaders think he was cured by the Devil and the space men are Devils.

An elderly Maya man thought the ancient Maya people did not view the invading Spaniards as technically superior. “We knew technologically advanced civilizations. We came from one. The space men were. They were not assisted by the alien astronauts; they were the ancient astronauts.” This expression came many times in Clarke’s interviews.

These indigenous Maya people seem to have a far greater understanding of the universe than even the most respected scientists, which is passed from one generation to another. Rigoberta Menchu, the Guatemalan k’che’ Maya activist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient wrote in his book, I, Rigoberta Menchu “.... I’m still keeping my Indian identity a secret. I’m still keeping what I think no one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets. Those secrets have been handed down for countless generations and define the people of Mesoamerica as indigenous.”

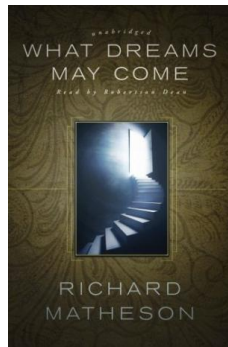
Dr. Clarke’s experience with these Maya people left her with the understanding that “the most important truth lies in the extraordinary nature and power of the experiences of the indigenous people of Mesoamerica and should provide us with another dimension of reality and humanities for the future.”

— Glenda Hawley, PhD



**What Dreams May Come** by Richard Matheson, 1978, Putnam's Sons, Tor Books since 2004, 319 pages. Movie adaptation by Vincent Ward, directed by Ronald Bass, produced by Interscope Productions.

This particular review should be something new for the Searchlight and hopefully something that can be repeated again in later issues. First of all, it is a combined book and movie review about the afterlife, and secondly it is a fictional story rather than the normal story about



the paranormal, afterlife, parapsychology, spirituality, consciousness science. And all the other aspects of consciousness that the Searchlight readers are used to seeing. While this book is a fictional work by Richard Matheson (1978), he states unequivocally in the Introduction that he conducted thorough research

into the subject of the afterlife by interviewing scientists, parapsychologists, mediums, psychics, religious philosophers and scholars, and metaphysicians about their views of the afterlife.

Matheson then wrote the book using the most commonly held ideas that they seemed to agree upon. Only the characters are fictional, as the saying saw goes. And the descriptive word 'supernatural' by which the book and movie are categorized is not wholly true. If there is any truth to it, and I believe there is, then contextual background to the fictional story is both scientifically accurate and perfectly natural.

I have been recommending this movie to people who have just lost loved ones to death for nearly two decades, even though I only read the book about five years ago. I sat in front of Julie Beischel, the foremost scientific investigator of mediums and the afterlife in the world, as we both listened a scientific presentation on the afterlife. I turned around to her and told her about the movie and she told me that it was her favorite movie about the afterlife. I then told to her to be sure and read the book, which she didn't even know about. This

book and movie seem to have a life of their own, or perhaps it would be better to say an afterlife of their own.

I would recommend that everyone should see the movie first so they can then picture events in the book more clearly in their minds. The various colorful and

beautiful scenes from the movie will enhance the reading. The movie is about the afterlife of Doctor Chris Nielsen (Robin Williams). The basic tenet of the book, and what we should take away for the storyline, is that we create our own afterlife in our surviving mind (consciousness), whether heaven, hell, or anything in between, by the lives we live before dying. The sheer beauty of the cinematography for the movie reflects his afterlife as well as that of all who live our lives well. Everyone should listen very carefully and thoughtfully to what Doc (Cuba Gooding Jr) and later the Tracker (Max von Sydow) tell Chris and how he reacts to it along his journey through the afterlife, as well as Chris' responses. Their conversations are spiritually, intellectually and consciously profound on many different levels of reality.

In life, Chris Nielsen was a pediatrician who dies in an auto mobile accident while running an errand for his wife. In the movie he has two children, his son Ian (about 15) and daughter Marie (about 12), both of whom died four years before him in an auto accident on the way to school. These were movie characters, but there were no children in the book. Chris leaves behind a wife, Annie (Annabella Sciorra), who is an artist working in an art museum.

The interplay and between Chris and Annie form the major storyline of both the book and movie, even when he is in his 'heaven' and she is still alive. The book is about their special mindful connection (love), what amounts to a natural connection (love) between a very special pair of soulmates that surpasses the bounds of heaven and earth, as well as the thin veil between afterlife and life.

Chris and Annie are vacationing students and meet accidentally while sailing small boats in Lake Locarno between Italy and Switzerland, where they immediately fall in love.



Their love was fated to be love at first sight, so they married soon after they came

back to America. The story then jumps forward to a scene in their home, at breakfast, where their children are getting ready to leave for school. Annie cannot take them, so their nanny borrows the Annie's van and takes them to school. They are all killed in a collision caused by a truck. Annie believes their deaths were her fault, driving her mad with guilt and into an asylum. She is only saved from a lifetime in the asylum when Chris admits that he could have reacted better when the children died and not shut her out (he was the one who had to be brave for both of them) and tells her that he



should have joined her in her breakdown and the asylum. All of this narrative is told by Chris after he dies, sort of mimicking a broken up past life review broken into separate parts when they need to fit the narrative of the story.

Chris' 'heaven', if it can be called that, is an extremely beautiful and colorful painting that Annie was completing in their home of their dream home on an island in the lake where they first met. The left panel of the painting was from the perspective of a smaller mountaintop covered by a beautiful flowery meadow that overlooked the lake with a waterfall to one side, their island dream home and the mountains beyond, where they hoped someday to retire. This is where Chris awakens in the afterlife after running through the tunnel of light. At first, everything is wet oil paint, which he gets all over his clothes and hands. He is literally in, or rather has created, her oil painting because that is what he is familiar with in his mind and living memory. He first meets Katie, his daughter's dead pet dog Katie, who leads him to the second panel of his wife's painting where he is a figure standing under a windswept tree on the mountaintop overlooking the lake and distant mountains. The third panel of the painting was blank during his lifetime.

He then meets his guide, who had helped him recognize and accept his death on earth allowing him to go through the tunnel of light. and brought him from earth. But his guide was only a shadowy partially-formed being on Earth that he instinctively called Doc. Doc is now standing, fully formed and recognizable, on the water in the lake and only then does Chris recognize him as his mentor Albert Lewis, who was also a father figure to him, while he completed his hospital residency for pediatrics. Albert, Katie and Chris journey to the third panel of Annie's painting, which she has just completed. Chris is completing his own picture of heaven through his intimate connection with Annie through the veil between life and death. It is only then that Albert confirms that Chris and Annie are soulmates whose mind (consciousness) connection transcends the boundaries, limits and borders between heaven and earth, afterlife and life. This acknowledgement sets up the rest of the story, or, as Doc (Albert) soon informs him and demonstrates to him, his heaven is his own mental picture of heaven.

Finishing the last panel of her artwork helps Annie in life to remember and honor Chris, yet she then destroys part of the new painted panel in anguish over the memory of Chris and their love for one another. Chris simultaneously sees or creates the destruction in his heaven. Now sharing her anguish, he yells 'I love you' as loud as his mind can and Annie subconsciously hears him. But she believes that she is responsible for Chris' death as well as their children's deaths and subsequently commits suicide. When told she is dead, Chris expects to see her soon but is told by Doc that he will never see her again because suicides are a special case that do not make it into heaven. By the committing suicide, they

create their own hell from their own thoughts within their own minds, where they exist forever since they refuse to ever accept their own death.

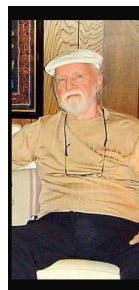
Suicides eventually lose their minds and remain in their seclusion forever. Chris objects to her being judged and condemned to hell, because Doc had told Chris that there are no judgements and no rules in heaven. If there are no rules, then why is there a rule that suicides go to hell. There isn't such a rule, and Doc convinces Chris that suicides create their own hell, just as Chris created his own heaven. Going to hell has nothing to do with judgement. Everyone creates their own afterlife, heaven or hell, from their unique life memories and deeds.

Chris then decides to journey to hell and bring Annie back to heaven. He is told that it is impossible, but Doc still arranges for a 'Tracker' to take them into hell where Chris can confront Annie for the last time. The Tracker also tells Chris he can never save her, it is impossible, but he is resolute and determined to save her. The rest of the story is about the journey to hell and saving Annie, but I don't want to give away the whole plot, which is extremely important to experience for one's 'self', as is the book. From here on out, there a number of twists and turns, so the viewer/reader needs to pay close attention.

Others have written about the differences between the book and the movie, and such reviews can be easily found on the internet. Yet no one else reviewing or reporting the movie and book seems to have mentioned anything about spirituality and consciousness, everyone refers only to mind, as the source of our reality rather than what is physical. I think that those who have reviewed and written about the book and movie just don't have what it takes to really understand spirituality and consciousness, whereas anyone experiencing the movie and book needs to consider both spirituality and consciousness instead of mind as extremely pertinent to our true reality and the storyline. The movie and book are both about a greater consciousness, pure and simple, than we are normally aware of, its continuity with and in the physical universe, even as consciousness is evolving and changing within the changing constancy of though universe itself.

I highly recommend these both to anyone dealing with death, either before the fact or after, *i.e.*, everyone. The book and DVD of the movie are available for as little as \$4 or \$5 through Amazon and other internet outlets. The DVD can also be found at Walmart for \$5 or less.

— Jim Beichler



"That which you believe becomes your world"

\* \* \* \*

I think *What Dreams May Come* is the most important (read effective) book I've written. It has caused a number of readers to lose their fear of death — the finest tribute any writer could receive....

— Richard Matheson  
(1926-2013)

## How “Unbroken” Hero Lou Zamperini Saw the Light

by Michael Tymn

Every now and then, while channel surfing, I'll come upon some evangelical preacher seemingly captivating his audience, so much so that when he asks audience members to come up on the stage and profess their faith, many of them parade to the stage as if mesmerized, fall backward into someone's arms, claim that they are healed of some long-standing affliction, and shed tears while praising God. Such scenes perplex me, and I wonder if it is all an act or if I am simply too ignorant to appreciate what is going on.

The Bill Graham crusades I occasionally watched a few decades ago were not quite as dramatic as most of the evangelical events, but I still wondered what he said in his sermons that motivated all those people to leave their seats and march up to the front as if they had suddenly come out of a life-long stupor and now saw the light. I just didn't get it. I still don't.

Apparently, Lou Zamperini, the real-life hero of the 2014 movie “Unbroken,” felt the same way when his wife asked him to attend a Billy Graham crusade one night in 1949. “I knew I was a sinner and was living a rotten, drunken life, but I didn't need someone to stand in front of me and tell me, so I fought it,” Zamperini told me when I interviewed him at his Hollywood, California office in 2001. “I told Cynthia I would go, but that as soon as he said, ‘every eye closed and every head bowed,’ I'm out of there.”

But something happened that night that turned Zamperini into a different person. “I experienced a 180-degree turn around and ever since then my life has been successful,” he continued his story with a sincere nod. I pressed Zamperini for an explanation as to what prompted the “turnaround,” but he just smiled and said something to the effect that it is something you have to experience yourself to understand.

Zamperini was the first person I had ever talked with about such an evangelical conversion and it made me rethink them. He was a sincere, intelligent man who had held on to his faith for some 52 years and had no reason to fabricate such a story.

He was my “white crow,” the one who proved that all such evangelical converts are not delusional or victims of temporary brain washing.

Zamperini, who transitioned from this life on July 2, 2014, at age 97, was a mere 85 when I interviewed him. He arrived for the interview on a skateboard. I had read his story in his 1956 autobiography, *Devil at My Heels*, long before the best-selling book about him was released a few years before the movie and was anxious to hear his first-hand account. It was a story in which the limits of human endurance went far beyond what most of us living in an epicurean world can even begin to imagine. It meant surviving in the rigid domain of despair, beyond the reach of help, or rest, or pity. It meant living from day to day with the heart tearing itself between hope and fear, merely subsisting under a cloud of doom with no finish line in sight. It meant starving and thirsting while confined to a life raft in the Pacific Ocean for 47 days. It meant fighting off sharks while the enemy shot at him from above. It meant being tossed around by waves that towered over him during an all-night storm on the 46th day. Then, with the maddened fury calmed, and after being taken prisoner by the Japanese on a small island, endurance meant living with the tyranny, torture, and torment of his captors, including the threat of decapitation, while confined to a box-like cell measuring six by three feet, and being fed only fish heads and rice scraps. And then there were two cold winters with a minimum of food in a POW camp in Japan, his weight dropping to around 76 pounds.



Zamperini had been a standout middle-distance runner during his high school and college years, making the 1936 Olympic team at age 19. Although he finished eighth in the 5000-meter in the Berlin Olympics, he apparently gave the crowd quite a stir with his blazing finish, covering the last quarter-mile in 56 seconds while passing half the field. He then met the devil himself as

German Chancellor Adolf Hitler was so impressed that he asked to have the young American brought to his box. “Ah! The boy with the fast finish,”

Zamperini recalls Hitler's reaction when he shook his hand.

After telling me that story, Zamperini opened a drawer on his desk and pulled out the German flag with the Nazi swastika that he took from in front of Hitler's office at the Reich chancellery. After seeing Hitler and his entourage pull up in a vehicle and go into the chancellery, he and a friend decided they wanted the flag as a souvenir. "After they went in, there were just the guards there," he recalled with some amusement. "I timed them marching back and forth and planned it so I could get across the street and grab the flag before they saw me." But he couldn't quite jump high enough to reach the flag and was caught by the guards after a shot was fired in the air. There was some discussion before Hitler came out and told the guards to give him the flag and let him go.

But Zamperini's real story began with the war and his service as an Army Air Corps navigator. When his B-24 developed engine trouble during a search mission and crashed at sea, his 47-day endurance test on the life raft began. He and two other survivors of the crash subsisted on a few raw fish, a half-dozen uncooked birds, a couple of shark's livers and rainwater. "We ate everything, eyeballs included, and it tasted like a hot fudge sundae with nuts on top. It was delicious," he said of tearing into and eating the birds like a wild man. He told of catching two sharks by the tail and swinging them into the raft, as one of the other two survivors of the crash put a signal flare down their mouths while Zamperini cut them open with a broken signal mirror.

When their raft was fired upon by Japanese planes, the three men were forced to jump in the water and "play dead." There they came under attack by sharks. "I'd straight arm them and hit them on the snout, and they'd take off," Zamperini recalled, adding that one of the three men, the tail gunner, died shortly thereafter, on the 33<sup>rd</sup> day.

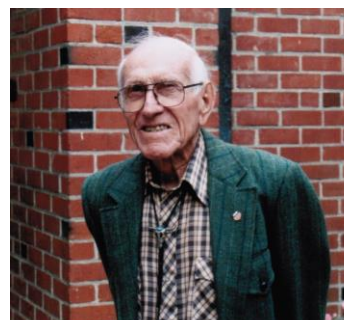
On the 47<sup>th</sup> day, they were picked up by a Japanese patrol boat and taken to the island of Maloelap and then to Kwajalein, where they were placed in small cages and given leftover fish heads and rice. Back in the United States, it was reported that Zamperini was missing and presumed dead. Zamperini and the other survivor were put on a ship and taken to Japan, where they spent two winters in a prison, being liberated at the end of the war.

After undergoing such adversity, many a

person would say that there can't be a God because a fair and just Creator would not permit such suffering. In fact, Zamperini leaned in that direction until that Billy Graham crusade. Although he had not been religious, he had called for God's help many times during his two-and-a-half-year survival struggle. "Lord, save me through the war and I'll seek you and serve you," was, he said, his frequent petition, one that he would quickly forget after the war. While his wounds slowly healed and his physical strength returned, there were bad scars and his hatred for the Japanese soldiers and guards who had brutalized him festered, at least until his conversion at the Billy Graham crusade.

It was at that crusade that Zamperini began to understand what was happening. His physical shell had been freed, but his soul had remained imprisoned. The craving for revenge had shackled him even more than his captors had. In 1950, he returned to Japan and confronted many of the guards who had beaten him, most of them now prisoners themselves, having been convicted of war crimes. But rather than lash out at them, Zamperini befriended them. The former prisoner was finally free. He devoted much of the rest of his life to operating a boys' camp designed to teach physical, mental, moral, and spiritual fitness to young people.

Whenever I channel surf now and encounter one of the evangelicals seemingly spewing nonsense, I stop to think about Lou Zamperini and how it turned his



life around, not temporarily but for the rest of his life. I am reminded that one's person's venom is another's elixir and that people are at different stages of spiritual development and with different needs. If a person finds peace of mind while living a life of love and service to others, that is, I believe, what is most important.

And when I encounter adversity, I think about what Lou Zamperini underwent and how little mine is in comparison. When I see the young cream puffs of today's world complaining about "being uncomfortable" because someone hurt their feelings with a crude remark, I want to tell them the story of real adversity.





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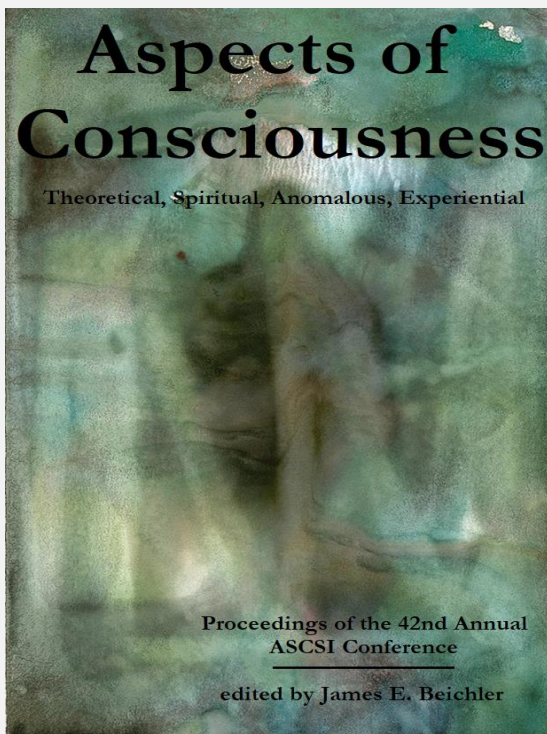
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The mission of The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc. is to discern, develop and disseminate knowledge of how consciousness studies and paranormal phenomena may relate to and enhance the development of the human spirit.

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The Searchlight is published six times a year (February, April, June, August, October, December) by The Academy for Spiritual and Consciousness Studies, Inc.

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